7063

A70-63

DEC 3 1970

Mr. D. D. Thomas
President
Flight Safety Foundation, Inc.
1800 N. Kent Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Several recent approach and landing accidents emphasize the need to give even more attention to the prevention of that kind of accident.

Four approach accidents occurred during the first half of the month of November 1970. The first three involved aircraft under 12,500 pounds, maximum certificated weight engaged in air taxi service, while the fourth involved a large jet transport engaged in a passenger operation.

In one recent accident, the aircraft struck the water one-fourth mile short of the runway approach lights during an ILS approach to an airport whose weather at the time was partial obscuration, 300 feet scattered clouds, 1-1/2 mile visibility in ground fog and smoke.

A second accident involved a VOR approach to an airport during which the aircraft crashed one-half mile short of the runway. Weather at the time was indefinite 500-foot obscuration, visibility one-half mile in fog.

A third accident involved an ILS approach which was abandoned. The aircraft was given vectors for another ILS approach during which the aircraft crashed approximately one-fourth mile short of the runway. Weather was partial obscuration measured 200 feet variable overcast, one-half mile visibility in fog, overcast variable from 100 to 300 feet.

The last accident involved a large jet aircraft which crashed while executing an approach to an airport which had a low, marginal ceiling, and low visibility restriction due to light rain, fog, and smoke.

Although the findings are incomplete in all of these cases, it is significant that in each, there was either a partial or complete obscuration reported because of fog.

There exists, more than ever, a need for a comprehensive analysis of low visibility approach and landing accidents by safety officials in government and industry as well as by pilots to find the answer to the question: How can these accidents be prevented? The Safety Board is continuing its priority attention to this safety problem.

The National Transportation Safety Board's review of these and other approach and landing accidents shows that they occur with needless regularity and that they are not confined to a single segment of aviation. It is evident that there are a number of factors which must be considered in preventing this type of accident, namely, airborne and ground equipment, procedures and piloting techniques and judgment. It is clear that safety in this regime of flight can be and should be continually improving the quality and increasing the quantity of landing aids and weather reporting facilities and services. It is equally clear that none of us in the aviation community can relax our attention with respect to the emphasis on effective education programs. Such programs must bring to the personnel involved the lessons to be learned from the unfortunate experiences of others. It is in this connection that we suggest that you support our objective with an educational program designed to reinforce those safety factors emanating from pilot awareness, flight management, operating procedures, skill and judgment.

The Safety Board particularly believes that all pilots should be thoroughly instructed in the hazards associated with shallow fog penetration. Under such conditions, pilots should be prepared to make the missed approach decision and execute it without delay whenever that alternate course of action is required.

Illusions tending to disorient the pilot during the final phases of the landing approach and the limitations of various systems are but two of the areas bearing upon such a decision . . . . hazards really, which must be recognized.

Safety can be improved by better and more airborne and ground facilities and services. The Safety Board has made numerous recommendations to the FAA relative to the provision of such facilities and services. In the meantime, however, pilots have to operate aircraft safely in the existing operating environment. We, therefore, believe that a sustained education program as discussed above is a specific action that industry organizations such as yours could now take that would tend to reduce the number of accidents in this category.

We appeal to your organization to contribute to safety by bringing this accident prevention message to the attention of operations managers and pilots who are themselves best able to implement it in exercising their operational decision-making responsibilities.

Sincerely yours,

Original signed by
John H. Reed
John H. Reed
Chairman

cy 7063

Mr. Ralph L. Harkenrider
Executive Administrator
Allied Pilots Association
P. O. Box 5524
Arlington, Texas 76011

Mr. Ted G. Linnert
Safety Director
Air Line Pilots Association
International
Munsey Building
1329 E Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20004

Mr. J. B. Hartranft, Jr.
President
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association
4650 East-West Highway
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Mr. D. D. Thomas
President
Flight Safety Foundation, Inc.
1800 N. Kent Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Mr. R. B. Ward
Executive Vice President and
Secretary
National Business Aircraft Association, Inc.
425 13th Street, N. W.
Suite 401
Washington, D. C. 20004

Mr. William H. Ottley
Executive Director
Suite 532
National Pilots Association
806 15th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005

Mr. Thomas S. Miles
President
National Air Transportation Conferences, Inc.
1156 Fifteenth Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005

7063

Mr. Stuart G. Tipton
President
Air Transport Association of
America
1000 Connecticut Avenue
Washington, D. C. 20036

Mr. Edward J. Driscoll
President
National Air Carrier Association, Inc.
1730 M Street, N. W.
Suite 710
Washington, D. C. 20036

Mr. Joseph P. Adams
Executive Director
Association of Local Transport Airlines
Wyatt Building
Suite 242
777 14th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005